many years he was the leading Chinese official on the Central Asiatic edges of the Empire. He extended the Chinese power in what is now the western portion of the New Dominion. The little states here often proved recalcitrant and Pan Ch'ao's life seems to have been one of fairly constant fighting. He made Chinese power feared even farther west, across the mountains, in territories which are now Russian, and one of his diplomatic agents reached the shores of the Persian Gulf. His exploits were certainly equal to those of any of the great Roman generals and were possibly superior to them. In his late sixties, worn out, Pan Ch'ao sought and obtained the Emperor's permission to retire, but died not long after his arrival at court.

The distant posts held by Pan Ch'ao were not easily retained. A son succeeded him in his command and seems to have had fair success. However, we read of repeated revolts of the subject states, of attacks of Tibetans on Chinese outposts, and of complaints at court at the cost of the military undertakings involved. Before many years the Han began retrenchment. Retreat was not steady or uninterrupted. At least once again, led by Pan Yung, another son of Pan Ch'ao, the soldiers of the Han were seen in the oases at the foot of the mountains that separate the present New Dominion from India and Central Asia, and Chinese influence appears to have been strong there until at least the second half of the second century. For years Chinese garrisons held points in what is now Western Kansu. Modern archeology has shown that the frontier wall built west of Tunhuang toward the close of the second century B.C. was held by Chinese garrisons

until the middle of the second century A.D. It was only when the increasing impotence of the Han monarchs made it difficult to maintain order even at home that these were withdrawn.

One object of all this costly military activity seems to have been to keep open the trade routes to the West. The present names of the cities and oases for which the Han strove—Kami, Aksu, Kashgar, Turfan, Khotan—indicate to any one at all familiar with the caravan routes that the Chinese were attempting to control and make safe the long roads by which their commerce passed to and from the cultural centers in the other parts of Asia.